1:Murphy and Quain E-4,5 (1938) 1955
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master at this dead-pan type of humor. When the women attempted to talk to him and Quain, he remained entirely disinterested, occasionally breaking in on them to address himself solely to the ethnographer. Although the women affected exasperation, they really enjoyed this negative attention.

The women were easy to frighten. Aloari teased his wife and sister-in-law by chasing them with a live snake in his hands. The women were also sensitive to touch (few men could resist brushing a hand lightly over an ever-exposed buttock when a crowd was present), and they became nervous when they saw that such teasing was impending. On a day when all the women had crowded into Quain's house, he pulled on the perineal cord of one of them. She immediately loosed a scream and ran out the door followed by the others, who laughed hilariously. Thereafter all the women expected to be teased by Quain, and they identified him somewhat more with the other men than they had before. The men often threatened rape in jest, but even when the women recognized the humorous intent, their basic anxiety was never completely allayed.

Pranks were frequent among the men. It was particularly amusing for a man to inform the others that Quain had given him a gift. Yati went to the trouble of filling a cartridge box with dirt and soberly telling all the men that the box was full of rifle shells. He was among the more popular jokers of the village. And pranks were played on him also. One night, in jest, Aloari shot at Yati's chicken with Quain's rifle on the pretext that it had been crowing. (The noise of the rifle report was also calculated to terrify the village.) Tun and Jakwanari occasionally tried to be funny by sitting alone and talking to themselves rapidly and incoherently. This was considered forced humor, and no one so much as chuckled.

A major source of diversion was gossip about who was cohabiting with whom. While this sometimes led to shouting arguments, it was more often merely playful talk, and it was treated as such. Accusations of sexual intercourse, sometimes true and sometimes false, were tossed back and forth between the men, usually with accompanying leers.

Manners and Morals

The Trumaí gossiped about sex, not because it was held to be morally wrong to do so, but because they had a frank and honest interest in it. Sex was considered a part of the "good life," but it was also thought to be a distraction from work. Thus, the chief made lengthy speeches castigating the men for being interested in nothing but sex when they should have been out planting. Similarly, Yanahi should have finished his puberty rites, but, as one of his kinsmen bluntly put it, all he wanted to do was "*tsidi*" (copulate). In reality the men took vicarious enjoyment in watching Yanahi exert his newly found sex prowess.

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577 831 833 156 123 Yanahi was less inhibited than any of the other men, but his behavior was not considered shocking or immoral. Quain had apparently arrived at the village just at the time that Yanahi was on the threshold of sexual experience. He appeared in Quain's house one night to show that he had an erection and announced that he would soon be having coitus. Thereafter, he rarely failed to tell Quain of his exploits. One night quite a crowd, including Yanahi and one of his paramours, Vatsiat, was gathered in Quain's house. The young man suddenly developed a longing for her and, as soon as all the visitors had left, satisfied his craving noisily amidst Quain's pots and pans. He was proud of his virility, as were most of the Trumaí men.

577 831 562 937 No discredit attached to the male involved in a love affair and very little to the woman. Oirupa merely scolded his sister for having copulated with Yanahi. Only where adultery was involved did promiscuity lower the status of a woman. Chastity before marriage was not expected, and there was not a single virgin in the village over the age of puberty. Older women without husbands or close relatives to protect them were often used for sexual purposes against their will. This was especially the case with unmarried foreign women. Some of them complained that they had to dispense their favors to too many men too often.

831 152 583 [123] This aggressiveness and the danger of bride-capture made the women extremely fearful of being raped, and, as noted above, they were uneasy even when the threats were made in fun. One morning Quain decided to get rid of his numerous female visitors by employing this device. They all fled except one, who, despite her seeming courage, looked worried. Without doubt, the women enjoyed visiting Quain, but a man told him that if he were to have intercourse with any one of them, they would all fear him. Over and above this fear of rape, there [578] was a definite hostility between the sexes, which was usually well controlled, but which on occasion might explode in open quarrels between the men and the women.

576 514 827 No cumbersome taboos surrounded physiological functions. Belching and the release of flatus were common in company, but generally disregarded. However, if an unusually unpleasant odor followed, those nearby spat on the ground as a mark of disgust. The men urinated near their houses or at the edge of the village plaza. The women went to the edge of the village clearing or behind the houses. Both sexes went a short distance into the brush to defecate, but at night elimination was permitted in the village plaza if a hole was first dug for this purpose and covered over.

There was no salacious attitude toward body processes. The Trumaí were puzzled by Quain's desire for privacy in his personal habits and his curiosity about other people's. One woman seriously asked if she could watch him eliminate.